competitiveness of Indian tea in the international market and also to cater to the requirements of international buyers which will help in boosting the Indian tea export. The imported teas have also to conform to the quality parameters as prescribed under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA). Moreover, the total quantum of tea imported into India is less than 2% of the total domestic production of tea.

- In the case of coffee, import of coffee in green bean form is carried out by the Export Oriented Units (EOUs) who re-export the same as value added products contributing to the foreign exchange earnings of the country. The annual average quantum of coffee imports during the last five years is only about 2% of the annual average export of coffee.
- In the case of rubber, duty free import of natural rubber against advance licenses and for EOU/EPZ units is banned. There is no import of natural rubber into the country for re-export by the multinational companies.

In order to protect the Indian tea and coffee producers, the Government has increased the import duty on tea and coffee from 70% to 100%. There is no proposal at present to temporary ban import of tea and coffee for re-export from the country.

New EPZs in Rajasthan

465. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any proposals to set up Export Processing Zones in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are planning to bring new projects to increase the exports of marble and other materials from Rajasthan; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to set up any Export Processing Zone by the Government of India, in Rajasthan.

(c) and (d) Export Promotion Council under Department of Commerce has already initiated a study under Market Access Initiative Scheme to promote Indian granite, marble and other stones to US market. The study would also identify the strategy to promote Indian marble from Rajasthan area too. In the next phase, selected exporters would be requested to participate in the trade exhibitions and buyers sellers meets in USA. This market effort is expected to continue for some time and as a result marble export from Rajasthan will get a boost.

Closure of industrial units

466. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of registered industrial units in the country during the last five years along with details of the total strength of labour in these units for these periods, State-wise and period-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that there is an increasing trend in closing down of industrial units; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor along with the number of workers affected by this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

New industries in North-Eastern Region

467. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of medium-size industries which are in existence at present in the North-Eastern States, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have any plan to set up new industrial plants/medium-size factories;

(c) if so, the details of such schemes/plans which are under consideration; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?